

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously presented): A nutritional formula having a pH, in its liquid state, in the range of 3.5 to 6, the formula comprising lactic acid and at least 70% by weight of the lactic acid is present as the enantiomer of L(+)-lactic acid, the formula is directly acidified.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The nutritional formula according to Claim 1, wherein the nutritional formula is in a powder form.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The nutritional formula according to Claim 1, wherein the nutritional formula is an infant formula.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The nutritional formula according to Claim 1 comprising a protein source, a carbohydrate source and a lipid source.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The nutritional formula according to Claim 4 comprising a protein source selected from the group consisting of whole or skimmed milk powder, casein, whey protein, soy protein, rice protein, carob seed protein, germ flour protein, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The nutritional formula according to Claim 5, wherein the casein and whey protein is intact or not hydrolysed.

Claim 7 (currently amended): A method of preparing a nutritional formula comprising the steps of

hydrating at least one of a protein source and a carbohydrate source,
directly acidifying the hydrated carbohydrate source and/or the hydrated protein source
~~by adding diluted L-(+) lactic acid to the hydrated carbohydrate source and/or the hydrated protein source~~ until a pH of about 3.5 – 6 is obtained and at least 70% of the lactic acid is present as L-(+) lactic acid.

Claim 8 (original): The method according to Claim 7, comprising the further step of adding a lipid source.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 8, wherein the step of adding a lipid source is performed before adding L-(+) lactic acid.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A method of preparing acidified nutritional formulas comprising the step of directly acidifying the nutritional formula by using a lactic acid chosen from the group consisting of isolated and purified L(+)-lactic acid.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A method of preventing growth of pathogens in nutritional formulas comprising the step of directly acidifying the nutritional formula by using a lactic acid chosen from the group consisting of isolated and purified L(+)-lactic acid.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The nutritional formula according to claim 1 comprising a source selected from the group consisting of a protein source, a carbohydrate source and a lipid source.

Claim 13 (new): The nutritional formula according to claim 1, wherein the L(+)-lactic acid comprises 0.5-3.5% of the nutritional formula.